

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection in Business Studies and Business**

**REPORT**

<b>School name</b>	Monaghan Collegiate School
<b>School address</b>	Corlatt, Monaghan, County Monaghan.
<b>Roll number</b>	64830E

**Date of Inspection: 19-10-2017**



### **WHAT IS A SUBJECT INSPECTION?**

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

### **HOW TO READ THIS REPORT**

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Business and Accounting under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Date of inspection</b>	19-10-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and business teachers</li></ul>

### School context

Monaghan Collegiate School is a co-educational, fee-paying, secondary school with a Protestant ethos; the current year enrolment is 267 students. The educational programmes provided are Junior Certificate, the Transition Year (TY) programme, which is compulsory, the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good.
- The learning intentions were shared effectively with students in all lessons in a way that provided them with a clear focus on what they should be able to do at the end of the lesson; highly effective practice was noted when the planned learning intentions were revisited to assess students' learning and affirm understanding.
- The uptake of Junior Certificate Business Studies and senior cycle Business has increased consistently over the past number of years.
- Very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons; students worked very successfully in a collaborative manner.
- There was scope to develop learning and assessment skills by sharing exemplars of quality work completed by students with the full class group.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good; there is scope to develop subject planning.

#### Recommendations

- Modelling of students' work should be developed further; this strategy would allow students to view a piece of work and engage in active constructive feedback; identifying and affirming students' work that is of good quality is key to preparing students for self-assessment.
- The overall quality of planning for the subject is satisfactory; the development of an action plan for business subjects would enhance the quality of planning and tie in with the whole-school approach to school self-evaluation (SSE).

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good.
- The pace and structure of lessons was good with smooth transitions managed from one stage to the next; students engaged well with the learning activities and interactions between students and teachers were very respectful in all lessons.
- Teachers demonstrated a very high level of pedagogical knowledge, competency and skill in their subject area.
- The learning intentions were shared with students in all lessons. This provided a clear focus on outcomes for the students; they had a clear understanding of what they should be able to do at the end of the lesson. Highly effective practice was noted when the planned learning intentions were revisited to assess students' learning and affirm understanding.
- There was evidence in lessons of teachers placing a strong emphasis on the development of the students' business literacy and numeracy skills as outlined in planning documents.
- Students' participation in classroom activities was monitored closely by teachers; good circulation among the students improved their participation level. Teachers were alert to providing one-to-one support to students when needed.
- Modelling of students' work should be developed further; this strategy would allow students to view a piece of work and engage in active constructive feedback. Identifying and affirming students' work that is of good quality is key to preparing students for self-assessment. The use of a visualiser would provide opportunities to view exemplars of students' work and engage in constructive feedback, assessment and peer assessment.
- A vibrant print-rich display was evident in the subject-based classroom. The display helpfully included the subject-specific language that students needed to engage with the subject. There were good displays of the students' own work. Examining and sharing students' work with the class group would be a very helpful approach to embedding junior-cycle key skills and would help students in preparing for classroom-based assessments (CBAs).
- Very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons; students worked very successfully in a collaborative manner that had a positive effect on learning.
- Students were active in their own learning, in their questioning and in their responses to questions, with adequate wait time provided by the teacher. Teachers facilitated these clear strengths in learning through the use of a range of methodologies within which student peer assessment and questioning were particular strengths.
- Effective questioning strategies were used in all lessons; this had a beneficial impact on developing student understanding.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) resources were well selected, varied and used. The range of media clips and presentations used enhanced the quality of teaching and learning.
- Homework is assigned regularly and corrected. Assessment-for-learning (AfL) strategies were evident in lessons where students assessed their peers' work and placed an asterisk beside areas for development. This formative approach to assessment fostered an active role by students in their learning.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- Business Studies is an options' group subject which is delivered as an eight-week taster module over two blocks in first year. Junior and senior-cycle uptake of Business has increased consistently over the past number of years. Business is offered as the only business subject at senior cycle and Enterprise is offered in TY.
- The Business module within the TY programme is very well designed. The aim of the module is to further develop students' work, life and enterprise skills in addition to developing financial literacy.
- Resources in the subject-based classroom are very good, with data projectors, white boards, personal computers and internet access provided.
- Timetabling of the subject across all years and programmes is very good.
- Students have open access to levels and change of levels is accommodated by following whole-school procedures.
- Enterprise education is very strong; students in junior cycle and senior cycle are encouraged and supported to participate in enterprise activities annually.
- Teachers are active members of their subject association, the Business Studies Teachers' Association of Ireland (BSTAI).

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of planning for the subject is satisfactory.
- The development of an action plan for business subjects would enhance the quality of subject planning and tie in with the whole-school approach to SSE.
- The business department has prepared a Junior Cycle Business Studies plan and first-year taster plan but teachers still need to receive continuing professional development (CPD) in this area. When relevant CPD has been accessed this plan should be further developed in linking the learning outcomes across the three strands of the specification.
- Data regarding the number of students taking business subjects in the certificate examinations and student attainment are reviewed annually against the national norms for the subject.
- Following attendance at Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) in-service training, which is planned to take place soon after the current inspection, the business department should agree a strategy for trialling the new methodologies for delivering Business Studies in classrooms. It would be very beneficial for the teachers to do this through peer mentoring in line with the Teaching and Learning in the Twenty-First Century (TL21) initiative which is established in the school.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

## THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;